BROADBAND USA
CONNECTING AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Accepting the Grant Award

1. **What is the deadline by which my organization needs to formally accept the BTOP award?**

   Infrastructure project grant recipients have **30 days from the receipt of the grant award notification email from the Grants Online (GOL) system** to sign and return the grant agreement form (Form CD-450) in order to remain eligible for the grant award.

   Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) and Public Computer Center (PCC) project grant recipients have **30 days from the date the grant award notification packet is mailed** to sign and return the grant agreement form (Form CD-450) in order to remain eligible for the grant award.

2. **What is the difference between the grant obligation date, award date, and notification date?**

   The grant *obligation date* is the date on which the Grant Office formally obligates the award and signs the grant agreement form (see the bottom of your CD-450 form).

   The grant *award date* is the first day of the recipient's *award period* as noted on the CD-450 form. The award date is the first day of the month in which the award was obligated (e.g., if the obligation date is February 15, the award date will be February 1). The timeline for completion of Special Award Conditions specified in your award package will be counted from the award date.

   The grant *notification date* is the date on which the Grant Office notifies the award recipient of their award. Infrastructure award recipients receive this notification via an email from the Grants Online system. Sustainable Broadband Adoption and Public Computer Center award recipients receive the notification in the mail. The signed CD-450 form is due back to NTIA 30 days from the notification date (see question 1).

3. **If I have questions on how to accept the grant award or question regarding the content of the grant award acceptance form (Form CD-450), where can I seek help?**

   Infrastructure project award recipients can reach out to the Grants Online help desk (877-662-2478; GrantsOnline.Helpdesk@noaa.gov) For all project types, your assigned Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) Federal Program Officer (referenced in the award letter) can also assist with the necessary paperwork and steps.

4. **This is the first federal grant project that my organization has undertaken. Where can I get additional information on the responsibilities and expectations of federal grant recipients?**

   The BroadbandUSA website at www.broadbandusa.gov provides helpful information for BTOP award recipients, including links to compliance information resources, dates of scheduled informational workshops across the nation, frequently asked questions regarding BTOP and grants administration, fact sheets, press releases and other informational resources useful to BTOP award recipients. This information can be reached by following the links on the left-hand tool bar of the website.

   In addition, there are many U.S. government resources and Web sites to assist in this effort, namely the Office of Management and Budget's grant management Web site (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_default/); the U.S. government's Web site dedicated to grants (www.grants.gov); the U.S. government's Web site dedicated to broadband funding (www.broadbandusa.gov/compliance.htm); and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's (Recovery Act) Web site (www.recovery.gov).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ASAP.gov: Accessing Grant Award Funds

1. **What is ASAP.gov and how do I register for it?**

   ASAP is the Department of Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments system, which enables recipients to draw down their federal award funds. The Federal Program and Grant Officers assigned to the recipient will be able to guide you through the process of registering on ASAP, which normally takes 3-4 weeks to complete. You will not be able to draw down any funds until your ASAP registration has been completed. If you are NOT already enrolled in ASAP, please provide the Grants Specialist identified in the CD-450 form and your Federal Program Officer with Point of Contact name, email address, mailing address, telephone number, and the organizational EIN and DUNS numbers. If you ARE already enrolled in ASAP, please provide the Grants Specialist and the Federal Program Officer with the seven digit number for your ASAP account.

2. **After I sign the grant agreement, how long will it take for us to receive the first wave of funding?**

   Once the recipient accepts the award and signs the required paper work, it usually takes 4-6 weeks before the recipient may begin to "draw down" funds. Under the ASAP system, payments are made through preauthorized electronic funds transfers, in accordance with the requirements of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. In order to receive payments under ASAP, recipients are required to enroll with the Department of Treasury, Financial Management Service, Regional Financial Centers, which allows them to use the on-line and Voice Response System (VRS) method of withdrawing funds from their ASAP established accounts. The following information will be required to make withdrawals under ASAP: (1) ASAP account number – the award number found on the cover sheet of the award; (2) Agency Location Code (ALC); and Region Code. However, there are several steps required for the initial funding, including registration on the **Automated Standard Application for Payments** (**ASAP.gov**) system.

Reporting Requirements

1. **I have heard that the reporting requirements are stringent for all Recovery Act programs. Where can I get additional information on meeting these requirements?**

   Grants awarded for this program will be subject to the applicable Recovery Act reporting regulations. The Web site dedicated to tracking progress related to the Recovery Act provides useful links and FAQs (www.Recovery.gov). Additionally, as part of the reporting process, all recipients must register through the Federal Reporting Web site, which tracks additional Recovery Act reporting requirements (www.FederalReporting.gov).

2. **What reports will I have to prepare for BTOP and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and when will my first reports be due?**

   There are types of three reports required from all BTOP grant recipients during each calendar quarter: (1) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) report; (2) Progress report; and (3) Financial Progress report. The first set of reports for the quarter in which the grantee received the award will be due in the first 30 days of the following quarter. The ARRA report will be due on the 10th day of that quarter, while the Performance Report and the Financial Report will be due the 30th day of the quarter. For example, for awards made in the January – March 2010 quarter, the ARRA report will be due on April 10th, and the performance and financial reports will be due on April 30th, 2010.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

3. How do I submit those reports?

The ARRA report will be submitted through the grantee's FederalReporting.gov account (see below for more details on how to register for FederalReporting.gov). The Financial Report (Form SF425) will be submitted through the Grants Online system for infrastructure awardees and via email for PCC and Sustainable Adoption Awardees. NTIA is currently working with the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to finalize the forms and process by which grantees will submit their Performance Reports, and will communicate the final instructions with the grantees as soon as they are available.

4. What should we do to prepare for the first reporting cycle?

The first step that recipients should take is to register with www.FederalReporting.gov. Once registered in FederalReporting.gov, recipients should establish a process to ensure that required reports are complete, consistently-prepared and accurate. As part of this process, recipients should determine which systems you will need to accommodate this reporting requirement, such as purchasing systems, accounting systems, human resources/personnel systems. Also, recipients are encouraged to identify a person or group within your institution who will be responsible for the reporting requirement.

5. How do recipients register to use FederalReporting.gov?

Recipients should register with www.FederalReporting.gov within 10 business days of their grant notification date. For infrastructure project award recipients, this deadline is 10 days from the receipt of the grant award notification email from the Grants Online (GOL) system. For Sustainable Broadband Adoption and Public Computer Center project award recipients, this deadline is 10 days from the date the grant award notification packet is mailed by the Grants Office. To register, recipients enter contact information and the appropriate Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number. Registration on Federalreporting.gov should take less than 5 minutes. Note: when registering on Federal Reporting.gov, recipients must enter the same Dun & Bradstreet (DUNS) number that was included in their original BTOP application. Recipients must be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) database as well. Further information on CCR and D&B is available at http://www.ccr.gov/FAQ.aspx and http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

6. How do the Recovery Act reporting requirements differ from the specific BTOP reporting requirements?

Recovery Act requirements are in addition to the specific BTOP reporting requirements. The BTOP reporting requirements call for recipients to report on the grantee's progress in completing the project, expenditure of grant funds, and the number and type of entities receiving new or improved access to broadband services. Further information on these reporting requirements is available in the Federal Register's Notice of Funds Availability for the Department of Commerce (DOC) (http://www.broadbandusa.gov/files/BB%20NOFA%20FINAL%2007092009.pdf). Recovery Act reporting requirements include data on jobs created by the project, information on the type of work and number of positions. More information on these reporting requirements may be found on the www.Federalreporting.gov Web site.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

7. **Will the reporting requirements for infrastructure grantees differ from those awardees undertaking Public Computing Center (PCC) and Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) projects?**

   The questions included in the BTOP Quarterly Progress Reports are standardized across Broadband Infrastructure, Public Computer Centers and Sustainable Broadband Adoption project types. Where applicable, these questions ask the recipient to provide information based on project-specific parameters for project progress, budget and key indicators tailored to each type of project. Recipients of grants for infrastructure projects will be asked to report on measures such as average broadband speed and number of subscribers. Recipients of PCC grants will report on aspects of their centers (e.g. average number of users, amount of training offered, and number of workstations available) and SBA grantees will provide information on other factors such as increase in broadband subscribers, cost of equipment, and success of awareness campaigns.

8. **What reporting requirements will the prime recipients, the subrecipients and vendors have for ARRA?**

   All Recovery Act grant recipients must report information in accordance with Section 1512 of the Recovery Act on a quarterly basis using the www.FederalReporting.gov Web site. Prime recipients of BTOP funding should work with their sub-grantees, contractors, vendors and consultants to satisfy all the www.FederalReporting.gov reporting requirements. Additional information on reporting requirements is available at www.recovery.gov.

9. **What are the ramifications of non-compliance with the recipient reporting requirements?**

   Non-compliance of reporting requirements will be treated as failure to comply with the terms and conditions of award. Ramifications may include withholding of funds pending compliance, additional oversight actions, or award termination.

10. **Where can I find more information on the Recovery Act reporting requirements, including how to estimate jobs created?**

    Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance provides additional information on reporting on job estimates, data quality and non-reporting recipients at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-08.pdf. In addition, the FederalReporting.gov website (http://www.federalreporting.gov) contains webinars and other useful guides on Recovery Act reporting.

Communications/Press

1. **My organization is pleased to participate in this program and would like to issue a press release. Are there any guidelines or restrictions for interfacing with the media that we must follow?**

   The BTOP award announcement provides an ideal opportunity to communicate the benefits of bringing broadband to unserved and underserved communities. As part of this exciting program, BTOP recipients are likely to receive considerable attention and scrutiny from the public, media, public policy leaders and others. Recipients are encouraged to work with the press in order to promote their BTOP-funded projects. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Office of Public Affairs is available to work with recipients on press-related needs. For media assistance, call Jessica Shafer at (202) 482-5670.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Compliance Requirements

1. **Where can I find additional details on the compliance requirements that will apply to BTOP recipients?**

    The *compliance section of the BroadbandUSA.gov website* found at http://broadbandusa.gov/compliance.htm contains links to a number of resources on federal and programmatic rules that govern BTOP grants. Also, please see the applicable OMB Circulars pertaining to Administrative Regulations, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_circulars/) and the OMB Guidance pertaining to Recovery Act Reporting Requirements (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/recovery_default/). In addition, NTIA will organize an informational grantee webinar specifically focused on compliance issues; more information on the webinar will be forthcoming from your Federal Program Officer.

Environmental Compliance

1. **Who should we reach to with environmental or historical preservation questions?**

    NTIA is committed to helping Grantees meet their obligations to comply with environmental requirements such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in the execution of their projects. Technical assistance is available to answer questions and provide one-time or ongoing guidance on compliance with these requirements. Because of the unique nature of environmental technical issues, please contact the NTIA environmental staff directly rather than your BTOP Program Officer with environmental requirement questions and requests for technical assistance. To request any assistance, please contact: Frank J. Monteferrante, Ph.D., NEPA Environmental Compliance Officer at (202) 482-4208 or fmonteferrante@ntia.doc.gov.

Whistleblower

1. **Where can I find the Whistleblower poster mentioned in one of the Special Award Conditions?**

    Please see the http://www.oig.doc.gov/recovery/whistleblower.html web site for the posters you may print and display at your site(s).